No.	Division.	Year.		Amount.		
		1895-96.	1896-97.			
				Rs.	a.	p.
1	North Thána	105	118	648	15	9
2	South Thána	86	155	398	12	6
3	Central Thána	75	70	603	3	4
4	Surat	21	19	126	4	0
5	Panch Mahals	117	120	265	1	0
	Total ...	404	482	2,042	4	7

40. The details of cases compounded under Section 67, Indian Forest Act, required by Government Resolution No. 1899, dated 13th March 1891, are given in the following statement :—

No.	Division.	Number of cases in which compensation was fixed at Rupees																						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	15	16	18	19	20	21	22	25	30	45	50	78	Total.
1	North Thána ..	36	28	12	9	7	4	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	...	...	...	3	2	...	1	...	2	1	...	118
2	Central Thána	28	11	5	3	3	3	1	...	1	3	...	2	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	70
3	South Thána ...	87	25	14	10	9	2	5	...	...	...	...	...	..	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	155
4	Surat	8	3	2	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	19
	Panch Mahals .	89	21	3	2	3	...	1	..	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	120
	Total ...	248	88	36	25	23	9	9	3	3	6	2	3	1	1	1	1	5	3	...	2	1	2	3	1	482

(2).—*Protection from Fire.*

41. The following is the tabular statement showing offences by fire with results :—

Range.	Details of prosecutions for offences by fire.					Amount of punishment.	Remarks.
	Serial No. of Fire.	Areas burnt.	Character of offence (whether careless or intentional).	Whether acquitted or convicted.	Section of law under which convicted.		
		Acres.					
North Thána ...	...	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	
Central Thána...	...	...	.....	.....	.....	.....	
South Thána.	1	30	Carelessness...	Conviction ..	Indian Forest Act 25 (*b*).	1 offender was fined one rupee and received 8 days' rigorous imprisonment.	
	1	10	Intentional ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	3 offenders were fined Re. 1 each and received 14 days' rigorous imprisonment each.	
	1	125	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	17 shikaries received 1 month's rigorous imprisonment each.	
	1	25	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	13 shikaries received 1 month's rigorous imprisonment each.	
	1	450	Carelessness...	Do. ...	Do. ...	1 offender was fined Rs. 30.	
Surat ...	2	50	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	1 offender received 15 days' imprisonment.	
	13	2	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	1 offender was fined Rs. 2.	
	18	60	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	1 offender received 1 month and 15 days' imprisonment.	
Panch Mahals	12	124/18	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	4 offenders were fined Rs. 200 and Rs. 100 were taken as compensation from them.	
	35	47	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	1 offender was fined Rs. 4.	
	93	8	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. do. Rs. 10.	
	28	0/2	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	Do. do. Rs. 15.	

42. During the year special measures were adopted by appointment of patrols in all the Circle except the Dángs. The following statement shows the progress and cost of these operations :—

SPECIALLY PROTECTED.

Number.	Division.	Area in Square miles.				Proportion of failure to area attempted.		Cost.				Proportion of area under fire protection to total area of Forest in charge of Forest Department.
		Attempted.		Protected.				Per Square mile protected.		Per acre protected.		
		1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	1895.	1896.	
								Rs. per cent.	Rs. per cent.	A. p.	A. p.	
1	North Thána ...	383	388	365	379	4·6	2·3	2 4 0	4 7 0	0 7	1 3	100·
2	Central Thána ...	314	371	297	343	5·5	7·4	23 4 0	10 4 0	0 6	0 3	97·
3	South Thána ...	423	409	373	387	11·8	5·4	2 12 0	42 0 0	0 2	1 0	97·
4	Surat	69	69	51	62	26·0	10·1	64 4 6	57 12 2	1 7	1 5	100·
5	Panch Mahals ...	88	65	26	61	32·3	6·5	40 0 0	44 0 0	1 0	1 0	11·
	Dángs (leased) ...	3	8	3	8	...	...	27 0 0	12 0 0	0 6	0 4	100·
	Total ...	1,230	1,310	1,115	1,240	9·3	5·3	159 8 6	170 7 2	4 4	5 3	75·
					Protected by Establishment.							
1	Central Thána ...	...	61	...	58	...	5	.....	.....	...	...	3·
2	Surat (Dángs) ...	675	670	...	...	100	100	.....	.....	...	...	100·
3	Panch Mahals ...	294	267	50	223	20·4	16·8	.....	.....	...	...	83·
	Total ...	969	998	50	281	94·8	71·8	.....	.....	...	...	61·3

On the whole a decided advance in protection is recorded. I fear, however, that too much should not be made of it.

43. In Thána an increased demand for grass no doubt influenced the success of the measures undertaken, but at the same time little or no reliance can be placed on the figures claimed, especially in South Thána. As has already been noted, the Sub-Division Forest Officer was engaged full time on famine fodder operations practically the whole season, and the Divisional Officer also was tied to one camp on the railway for nearly two months of the season, so that efficient check on the returns of area burnt was simply impossible. So far as undersigned could judge from a passing view of the country, the area burnt seemed to be very much as usual. The low percentage burnt in North Thána is significant when it is remembered that it is the "jungli" division par excellence.

44. The Surat fires show a great improvement and are probably fairly trustworthy. As usual the area burnt represents the results of a few large fires—3 in the present season—in the large reserve in the east of the Mándvi Range.

45. In the Panch Mahals 65 suqare miles were specially protected and the result is gratifying. A special feature of this success is the preservation of the forest on the slopes of the Páwághad Hill from fire for the first time in the memory of man. The Divisional Forest Officer guarantees the accuracy of the figures, which also is most satisfactory, and this result has been obtained at a very reasonable rate considering that a good deal of cost of initiation (line-cutting) is included in this rate. The area unprotected, or rather not specially protected, also shows an improved percentage, probably also due to some extent to the enhanced value of the grass on account of scanty rainfall and consequent short supply.

46. The total recorded number of fires during the year was 605 against 688 of 1895-96. The total area burnt was 74,180 acres against 114,563, from which it is fair to conclude that the efforts made to prevent and suppress fires are gradually beginning to meet with some success, since both the number of fires reported and the area burnt over are both well below the figures of last year.

Division.	A		B		C														Causes unknown.		Total (A, B and C).	
	Fire caused by accident or through carelessness in burning fire-lines.		Fire entering the Forest by crossing exterior fire-traces.		Fire beginning the inside of Reserve of fire-traced area.																	
					Owing to carelessness or accident.						By intentional firing.											
					By workmen employed in the Forest.		By villagers, travellers, &c., passing through the Forest.		By Railway engines.		By lightning or by fire-balloons.		In order to obtain new grass.		In order to turn out game or to reduce cover.		Maliciously fired.		Total.					
	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.
North Thána ..	3	41	3	430	..	...	2	60	..	...	..	...	...	...	8	824	...	...	8	824	45	4,390	61	5,745
Central Thána...	4	167	1	160	3	172	1	50	1	25	...	...	...	...	3	167	2	74	5	241	152	11,883	167	12,698
South Thána ...	3	78	31	3,989	3	22	8	84	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	361	2	167	4	528	114	16,242	163	20,943
Surat	..	...	1	50	...	...	23	4,103	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	24	4,153
Panch Mahals ...	6	174	37	11,419	1	7	65	8,890	7	1,912	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	560	12	560	62	7,679	190	30,641
Total ...	16	460	73	16,048	7	201	99	13,187	8	1,937	...	...	...	...	13	1,352	16	801	29	2,153	373	40,194	605	74,180

(3).—Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.

47. The following statement gives details of cattle impounded during the year under report:—

Number.	Division.	From open Forests.		From closed Forests.		Total.	
		1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
1	North Thána ...	690	391	1,478	1,089	2,168	1,480
2	South Thána ...	...	...	1,242	1,324	1,242	1,324
3	Central Thána ...	51	37	1,517	2,076	1,568	2,113
4	Surat	839	757	628	718	1,467	1,475
5	Panch Mahals ...	1,330	1,805	771	2,328	2,101	4,133
	Total ...	2,910	2,990	5,636	7,535	8,546	10,525

48. The grazing rules, sanctioned under Government Resolution No. 4596, dated 7th July 1891, were modified a little in respect of the Panch Mahals Division under Government Resolution No. 1663, dated 2nd March 1897, under which Rule XVII has been cancelled. It was brought to the notice of Government that this rule could not be worked in the Panch Mahals in the circumstances in which the cattle of the district are herded.

In the Surat Division the grazing rules were in force, whereas in Thána, except Bassein, Bhiwndi, Kalyán, they have not yet been introduced.

Fencing.

49. There were no fencing operations undertaken in the Thána District, except that a coupe was enclosed with "Euphorbia" at a cost of Rs. 7-4-0 as an experiment in the South Thána Division. In Surat the reserve forest of Goema was fenced in with wire at a cost of Rs. 207-12-0. In the Panch Mahals no fencing was done.

Civil Suits.

50. There have been two civil suits pending since last year. One is Raghunath Vithal Desai *v.* The Secretary of State for India, and the other Govind Atmárámshet of Bassein *v.* the Range Forest Officer, Bassein, and others. The former has sued for the recovery of Rs. 402-10-0 deducted from his deposit on account of breach of contract agreement, and the latter for the recovery of damages amounting to Rs. 4,999 suffered by the complainant on account of being criminally prosecuted for theft of forest produce.